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Terrorism Review

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4 August 1983

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GI TR 83-016
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**Terrorism
Review**

25X1

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1	Perspective—Terrorists Don't Need High Technology To Produce Major Consequences (OGI)	25X1
5	Highlights	
		25X1
11	Peru: Possible Changes in Terrorist Tactics (ALA)	25X1
		25X1
19	Statistical Overview	
21	Chronology	

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**Terrorism
Review**

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Perspective***Terrorists Don't Need High Technology To Produce Major Consequences***

In our last issue, our perspective dealt with the terrorist threat to nuclear weapons storage sites in Western Europe. This sort of "high-technology, high-consequence" threat gets intense consideration precisely because of the possibility of catastrophic consequences—even though no such incident has ever taken place. Major consequences, however, if not catastrophic ones, can also be produced with very ordinary technology.

The threat of catastrophic terrorism has been well studied. Robert K. Mullen, for example, in his 1978 monograph "Mass Destruction and Terrorism,"¹ pointed out that whereas killing large numbers of people used to be labor intensive, current technology in the form of nuclear devices and toxic chemical and biological agents has, theoretically at least, given small groups and even individuals the capability to inflict massive destruction.

Mullen, along with many others who have examined this issue, concluded, however, that the probability that terrorists would cause massive destruction was very low. Following is a typical chain of reasoning:

- Among all terrorists, only a very few—if any—would be capable of overcoming the physical and technical obstacles hindering them from using a high-technology mechanism to try to wreak mass destruction.
- Among those few capable terrorists, only a small portion—if any—would actually want to evoke catastrophic destruction, which they would commonly view as counterproductive, if not immoral.
- Owing to technical difficulties, most attempts to cause massive casualties using ultrasophisticated means would probably succeed only in part, resulting in merely major consequences—and terrorists smart enough to employ such mechanisms would realize this in advance.
- The technology needed to produce major consequences is neither sophisticated, by today's standards, nor difficult to obtain, and terrorists would generally settle for it in preference to mounting a probably futile effort to obtain higher technology that would probably not produce any more damage.

¹ *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 32, No. 1, 1978.

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GI TR 83-016
4 August 1983

Secret

The fact that terrorists seldom produce the maximum amount of damage possible using ordinary technology, however, suggests that most of them do not want to produce even major consequences, much less catastrophic ones. The data in our File of International Terrorist Events (FITE) tend to support this conclusion. Following are the 10 most lethal terrorist events recorded during the last 15 years:²

Deaths	Date	Place	Event
161	Aug 78	Lebanon	Bomb destroys Beirut apartment house.
100	Dec 77	Malaysia	Airliner crashes during hijacking.
88	Sep 74	Greece	Airliner crashes after bomb explosion.
82	Jan 76	Lebanon	Airliner crashes after bomb explosion.
81	Jun 80	Italy	Airliner crashes, possibly due to explosion of bomb or missile.
76	Aug 80	Italy	Bomb explodes in Bologna train station.
73	Oct 76	Barbados	Airliner crashes after bomb explosion.
68	Dec 80	Colombia	Airliner crashes after bomb explosion.
65	Apr 83	Lebanon	Bomb destroys US Embassy in Beirut.
59	Feb 79	Zimbabwe	Airliner shot down by missile.

Without taking anything away from the tragedies reflected in this list, we may note that the situation could easily have been much worse. The largest airliners today carry several hundred passengers, yet the most ever killed in a crash caused by terrorism was 100. Considering the availability of shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles such as the SA-7 (Strela), terrorists have not used them very often. Although marine passenger vessels carry many more people than any aircraft, as far as we know, no attempts have been made to sink one. Office and apartment buildings often house thousands—sometimes tens of thousands—of occupants, yet the most we have recorded killed in a terrorist bombing of a building was 161, and only one other such bombing killed more than 50. Only one incident among the thousands recorded resulted in more than 100 deaths.

Why are these numbers so low? Are terrorists restraining themselves because they believe tactics of mass destruction would be counterproductive? Or because they are just not that evil, or ambitious, or bold, or crazy? Have good security practices and other counterterrorist precautions been responsible for the relatively few deaths? Have we simply been lucky?

We do not know the full answer. Certainly, few terrorists are trying for mass-destructive effects. But undoubtedly, we have also been lucky. Bombs intended to explode on airliners carrying many more than 100 passengers have been found and defused, or have failed to work, or have exploded without bringing the plane down. According to the sole survivor of three Japanese Red Army terrorists who killed 30

² It should be noted that FITE contains only data on international events (that is, events involving persons of more than one nationality) and that, unavoidably, even these data are incomplete.

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people in a 1972 attack at the Lod Airport terminal in Tel Aviv, the group meant to kill as many people as they could as fast as they could until they themselves were killed. Such evidence leads inescapably to the conclusion that terrorist incidents involving major consequences are more or less a matter of numbers: the more attempted, the greater the likelihood that some will succeed.

What would lead to an increase in such terrorism? An uncomfortably large number of possibilities exist, for example:

- The advent of a nihilistic or sociopathic terrorist group with mass destruction as its primary goal. Western Europe seems the most likely spawning ground.
- The development in the minds of terrorists of a conviction that all citizens of an enemy country or members of an opposition group are valid targets, not just its officials or soldiers.
- An increase in the availability of weapons such as the SA-7 that can cause large casualties. Currently, such missiles cost about \$60,000 on the "gray market," more than many potential users can come up with (presuming they know how to find the gray market).
- A highly publicized terrorist success involving the threat of causing mass casualties.
- The development of a spirit of competition among terrorist groups regarding how much damage or how many deaths they can cause.

We might note that, if terrorist actions with major consequences—say, involving hundreds of deaths—become commonplace, such incidents will gradually lose their power to shock. This might induce an increasing number of terrorists to reconsider the high-technology option. At that point, the reassuring calculus we outlined earlier in this article will no longer apply.

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Highlights**Alert List**

West Germany: Possible Targeting of Ramstein Air Force Base. West German officials and US military authorities have reported that radical groups may attempt to disrupt the open house at Ramstein scheduled for 7 August with acts of violence. According to these reports, US "weapons of destruction" have been targeted. [REDACTED] 25X1

International: Armenian Terrorist Threat. We expect the threat of indiscriminate violence from Armenian terrorists—particularly the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)—to continue at a high level for the near term. A disturbing development involves press statements by French lawyer—and ASALA spokesman—Patrick Devician that ASALA will conduct attacks in the United States aimed at forcing Turkish acknowledgment of the 1915 genocide. Although the United States has not been the target of ASALA attacks to date, we note previous statements by Devician concerning ASALA attacks on Turkish Airlines have been borne out. Despite extensive arrests in France, which disrupted its network, ASALA has struck at French interests in Tehran and has threatened to destroy the French Embassy there if ASALA members held in French custody are not released. ASALA may also have been responsible for a recent attempted bomb attack on British interests in retaliation for the sentencing of an ASALA terrorist. [REDACTED] 25X1

Threat Level in Peru Increases. Terrorists, presumed to be Sendero Luminoso, have carried out a series of daring, coordinated attacks in Lima, which demonstrate undiminished capabilities for urban operations, despite numerous arrests and vigorous efforts by the security forces. On 21 July, terrorists again blacked out the capital and, in the days that followed, assaulted a police station, two power stations, the home of a police official, the international airport, and other targets in the city. [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] 25X1

The failure of the security forces to arrest the perpetrators of the attacks quickly and the impact of the terrorism on Lima, in our estimation, will encourage escalating terrorist assaults. [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] 25X1

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GI TR 83-016
4 August 1983

Secret




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Key Indicators***West Germany: Revolutionary Cells' Involvement in Anti-US Activities.***


Recent military reporting that the Revolutionary Cells (RZ) are involved in planning violent actions for the fall peace demonstrations and actions against munitions transports is disturbing because of the group's past successes in attacking US interests. We believe that small-group tactics, which are characteristic of the RZ and which were effectively employed in the Krefeld riots in June, are likely to be the modus operandi of radical groups this fall. 

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Significant Developments

Sri Lanka: Sinhalese-Tamil Violence. The killing of 13 Sri Lankan Army personnel in a Tamil Tiger ambush on 23 July has touched off widespread communal violence in Colombo. Although all Americans are reported safe, the violence between Sinhalese and Tamil has left at least 500 Tamils dead and their homes and businesses destroyed. The Sinhalese backlash is far more widespread and vehement than ever before. The eruption of violence was so swift that we suspect it may have been preplanned. Sri Lankan security forces have been unable—and perhaps unwilling—to control the situation. 

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France: Criticism of Counterterrorism Effort Expected. We believe the French Government will come under severe criticism for its counterterrorist efforts in the wake of the terrorist bombing at Orly Airport, which killed seven and injured nearly 60. The French Government had ample indications of possible ASALA attacks against Turkish facilities and failed to take adequate precautions. The Armenian terrorist group ASALA had frequently announced its intentions to attack Turkish Airlines and had conducted such an attack on 22 January 1983. The sentencing of an ASALA member on 8 July for an attack on the Turkish Airlines counter at Orly heightened the terrorist threat in view of ASALA's past record for retaliatory attacks against governments imprisoning its members. 

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Peru: Possible Changes in Terrorist Tactics

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The recent increase in Sendero Luminoso terrorist attacks in Lima reportedly has attracted growing Cuban interest in the group and could reflect a new emphasis on urban operations. The terrorists' assault of 11 July on the headquarters of President Belaunde's party—symptomatic of increased insurgent aggressiveness this year—barely missed several important government and party figures. Previously the SL had targeted only provincial officials.

Further attacks on political leaders and major urban targets are likely as the insurgents attempt to attract increased publicity and provoke visible government repression in the capital. The new tactics may represent an effort to divert the Army's attention from the insurgents' stronghold in Ayacucho department; however, rather than a fundamental shift away from the group's Maoist strategy of long-term rural warfare. The group's continued resilience, despite the government's commitment of thousands of troops and police, probably will produce renewed public pressure on Belaunde for tougher measures, including introduction of the death penalty for terrorism.

For several years, Havana has avoided contact with the Sendero Luminoso, primarily because of the group's anti-Cuban orientation, incompatible ideology, and low prospects for success. In addition, Cuba's aversion to the group may have been affected by the Soviet Union's lucrative arms supply relationship with Peru. Castro apparently is impressed, however, by the intensity of the group's activities this year and may now view it as a viable revolutionary movement that Cuba can no longer afford to ignore. Until convinced of the Sendero Luminoso's staying power, Havana probably will proceed cautiously, maintaining indirect contact and offering only a minimal level of assistance. There is still no indication, moreover, that the SL is willing to accept such external support.

While Havana has fared poorly in its yearlong efforts to upgrade diplomatic ties with the Belaunde government, its decision to consider supporting the Sendero Luminoso is not attributable to frustration on that score. Havana's hopes for an eventual improvement in relations with Lima, however, may temper somewhat its flirtation with the group.

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GI TR 83-016
4 August 1983

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Statistical Overview

Type of Victim of International Terrorist Incidents, September 1982-June 1983 ^a

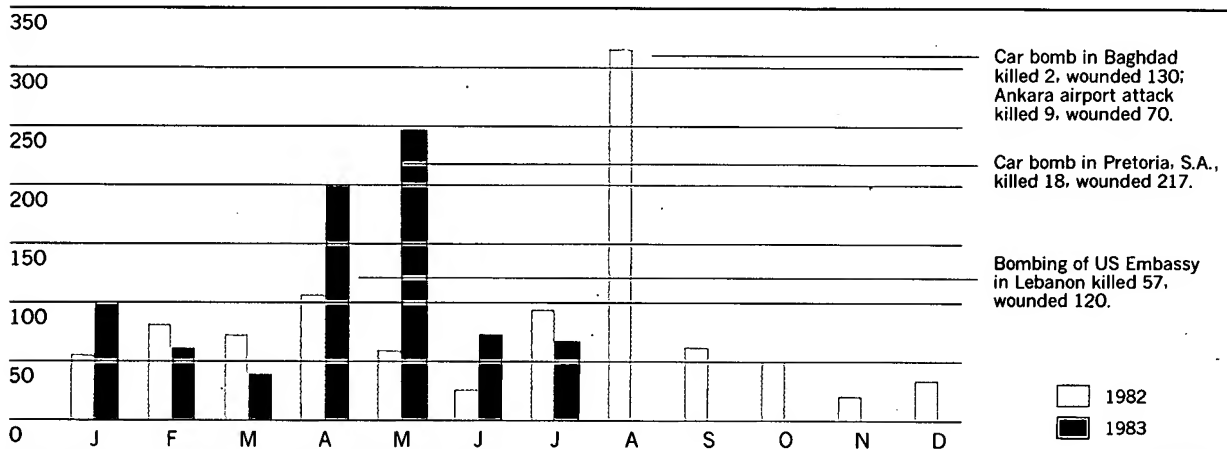
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Total	57	44	47	55	58	75	74	58	65	38
Government officials	0	2	2	6	2	3	5	7	10	5
Diplomats	35	20	22	26	33	35	36	28	24	14
Military	13	6	10	11	2	11	13	7	4	4
Business	2	12	8	1	9	8	7	9	8	7
Private parties, tourists, missionaries, and students	3	2	4	7	8	7	8	3	16	5
Other	4	2	1	4	4	11	5	4	3	3

Geographic Distribution of International Terrorist Incidents, September 1982-January 1983 ^a

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Total	57	44	47	55	58	75	74	58	65	38
North America	7	0	4	3	5	5	2	11	2	6
Latin America	18	12	9	14	9	18	19	12	20	12
Western Europe	22	22	21	13	10	32	20	17	19	5
USSR/Eastern Europe	3	3	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	2
Sub-Saharan Africa	1	1	0	0	3	3	5	4	8	1
Middle East and North Africa	3	2	4	13	6	12	20	8	15	9
Asia/other	3	4	9	6	7	2	8	5	1	3

^a Figures for the most recent months are subject to change as additional data are received.

Deaths and Injuries Due to International Terrorist Attacks



Figures for the most recent months are subject to change as additional data are received.

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Chronology

This chronology includes significant events, incidents, and trends in international terrorism. It provides commentary on their background, importance, and wider implications. It does not treat events listed in previous editions of the chronology unless new information has been received. [REDACTED] 25X1

2 June 1983**Spain: Counterterrorist Operations in Basque Country**

In Vizcaya, Spanish police disrupted three Basque Fatherland and Liberty/Military Wing (ETA/M) "legal" commando groups—individuals usually involved in support functions and not actual attacks—in a large-scale counterterrorist operation. Police also discovered three weapons caches—containing explosives, detonators, handgrenades, and ammunition—belonging to one illegal commando group, whose members were able to escape. [REDACTED] 25X1

12 July 1983**Australia: Arrest of Suspected Armenian Terrorist**

Australian authorities arrested Krikor Kevelian when he arrived in Australia carrying four guns in his luggage. Kevelian also carried leaflets calling for support for the Los Angeles Five, a group of Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) who were arrested for planning an attack on the Turkish Consul in Philadelphia. [REDACTED] 25X1

13-15 July 1983**Italy: Arrest of Terrorists**

In Turin, Italian carabinieri arrested 15 Prima Linea (PL) sympathizers in a large antiterrorism operation. Police believe they were attempting to build a new terrorist group—the Revolutionary Communist Nuclei—after the dissolution of the PL group in Turin last year. Two of the sympathizers were employed in a Turin bank, and the police believe they facilitated bank robberies by suspected terrorists over the past several months. [REDACTED] 25X1

17 July 1983**France: Arrest of Orly Bomb Suspect**

In Paris, French police arrested the head of the military wing of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) in France, Varadjian Garbidjian, who confessed to placing the bomb at Orly Airport on 15 July, which killed seven people and injured nearly 60. Fifty-six other suspected Armenian terrorists were arrested in two police sweeps and 11 have been indicted on terrorist-related charges. Numerous telephone threats to French interests worldwide have been received from ASALA representatives demanding the release of the arrested suspects. [REDACTED] 25X1

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GI TR 83-016
4 August 1983

Secret

United Kingdom: Bomb Discovered Near Court

In London, a bomb was discovered near the court where two ASALA members were on trial for conspiracy to attack the Turkish Embassy in London. Since ASALA has previously conducted retaliatory attacks against countries holding its members, authorities suspect that ASALA is responsible for the bomb, which was defused without incident. [REDACTED]

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18 July 1983

Austria: Arrest of West German Rightwing Extremist

In Graz, police arrested a well-known West German rightwing fanatic, Michael Wrosch, and three Austrian nationals for allegedly destroying memorials to Nazi victims. One of the suspects confessed that an assault on the Bavarian State Court in Munich, where the trial of rightwing extremist Friedhelm Busse is currently taking place, had been planned. [REDACTED]

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20 July 1983

Iran: ASALA Threatens More Attacks in France

In Tehran, an anonymous telephone call to a French news agency threatened more terrorist attacks in France if the French Government continued its "terrorism" against the Armenian people—a reference to arrests of more than 50 Armenians during the investigation of the Orly Airport bombing claimed by ASALA. Since ASALA has conducted attacks in Iran in the past, we believe the threat to be credible. [REDACTED]

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Spain: Terrorist Tactics

In Cadiz, a Spanish newspaper revealed that Spanish military security has obtained a copy of a questionnaire used by the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) terrorist group to collect information on military installations—a primary target of the military wing of ETA (ETA/M). The questionnaire was sent to a military conscriptee and requested details concerning availability of weapons, storage locations, models of arms and explosives as well as political materials and actual plans of military installations. The collection of such information by ETA/M may indicate plans to attack a military base. ETA/M has conducted such attacks in the past to obtain weapons and materiel. [REDACTED]

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21 July 1983

Lebanon: Dodge Released

Dr. David Dodge, president of American University in Beirut kidnaped on 19 July 1982, was released in good health, through Syrian intervention. [REDACTED]

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Peru: Terrorists Black Out Capital

For the second time this year, terrorists attacked Lima's electrical system, blacking out the Peruvian capital. The perpetrators are assumed to be Sendero Luminoso, and several hundred suspects reportedly have been detained by the security forces. Unconfirmed reporting indicates the government has declared all high-voltage towers, electrical plants, and telecommunications facilities to be restricted zones and is providing increased security for them. [REDACTED]

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22 July 1983

Peru: Research Facility Attacked

Between 15 and 30 masked men and women, some armed with submachineguns, invaded the Cameloid research station at La Raya in southern Peru and systematically destroyed the installation, which is associated with a Texas university. Some 25 persons working at the station were bound, but no one was injured during the incident that lasted more than five hours. Five Americans visiting the site were harangued by the terrorists who made clear that "Peruvians can do their own research." The attack raises questions about the continued viability in Peru of projects in which US institutions play a prominent role. [REDACTED]

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Iran: ASALA Attacks on French Interests

In Tehran, ASALA claimed credit for two bomb blasts that damaged the French Embassy and the Air France office. ASALA had warned of attacks on French interests in Iran unless the French Government released ASALA terrorists being held in France. [REDACTED]

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Turkey: Leftist Terrorists Arrested

In Ankara, Turkish security forces captured 13 militants attempting to join the Turkish People's Liberation Party Front. Suspects claimed to be in contact with organization members who had fled abroad and were procuring weapons, explosives, and unidentified technical material to be used in the group's actions. [REDACTED]

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23 July 1983

The Netherlands: Arrest of Armenian Terrorist

In Almelo, Dutch police arrested a Turkish man of Armenian descent on suspicion of killing a Turkish diplomat on 14 July in Brussels. Police are continuing the search for a second gunman believed responsible for the attack, which was claimed by the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide (JCAG). [REDACTED]

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Sri Lanka: Communal Violence

The Tamil Tiger ambush in which 13 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed touched off Sinhalese murder of Tamils and destruction of their property that is the most widespread and violent to date. [REDACTED]

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Italy: Radicals Publish Detailed Military Map of Italy

In Rome, Radical Party Secretary Marco Pannella distributed to newsmen a detailed map pinpointing American NATO and Italian military bases, troop strengths, weapons types, and location of conventional and nuclear arms stockpiles.

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Although none of the material was believed to be classified, the compilation of such detailed information will probably be exploited by anti-INF deployment protestors and may also be used by terrorists targeting NATO bases in Italy. []

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Spain: Terrorists Kill Businessman in Basque Country

In Vitoria, Basque Fatherland and Liberty/Military wing (ETA/M) guerrillas are believed responsible for the shooting death of a local businessman. Nine-millimeter parabellum shells—ETA/M's standard ammunition—were found at the scene, although there has been no claim of responsibility nor any apparent motive for the attack. []

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Spain: Terrorist Robbery

In Villabona, suspected Basque terrorists held up an armored bank van and escaped with 43 million pesetas (approximately US \$288,000). Previous reporting has indicated that the Political/Military Wing of ETA—Eighth Assembly needs funds to continue operations, and we believe they may have been responsible for this attack. []

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24 July 1983

Northern Ireland: IRA Bombs Destroy Hotel

In west Belfast, Irish Republican Army (IRA) gunmen broke into a hotel, robbed the staff and patrons, and set up explosive devices that exploded moments later, collapsing the front of the building. Patrons of the hotel were evacuated before the blasts, and no injuries were reported. In a communique, the IRA claimed the hotel was targeted because British security forces were planning to take over the hotel temporarily. []

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Northern Ireland: Continued Irish Terrorism

In west Belfast, gunmen believed to be Irish terrorists fired a heavy-caliber weapon at an Army lookout post. An unexploded mail bomb was also discovered and defused. No injuries were reported. In a separate incident, suspected IRA gunmen blew up a railroad signal post outside Belfast, destroying the post but causing no personal injuries. Four people were victims of gunshot wounds in a suspected IRA retribution attack on informers. Clashes between police and demonstrators resulted in numerous arrests in separate flareups of violence in Belfast. []

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Peru: Terrorists Attack Airport

Causing damage estimated in excess of \$1 million, terrorists attacked navigation equipment at the Jorge Chavez Airport in Lima, destroying transmitters and antennas and causing delays in international air traffic. []

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United Kingdom: ASALA Terrorist Sentenced

In London, ASALA terrorist Zaven Bedros—who admitted plotting to attack the Turkish Embassy in London—was sentenced to eight years for possessing firearms. A second defendant, also identified as an ASALA member, was acquitted. []

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25 July 1983

Peru: More Attacks

For the third time in five days, terrorists attacked targets in Lima with coordinated assaults against a police station, two power stations, the home of a police official, the administrative office of San Marcos University, and other targets in the city. The ability to mount continuing assaults despite the best efforts of the security forces suggests a more effective and resilient organization than had previously been supposed. []

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Iran: Attack on French Mission Claimed by Armenian Terrorists

In Tehran, the Orly Group—believed to be a cover name for ASALA—claimed responsibility for the bomb attack on the French Trade Mission. The explosion—the second attack on the mission in three days—caused damage but no injuries. In a telephone call to Tehran Bureau of *Agence-France Presse*, a spokeswoman for the Orly Group threatened a more lethal attack the next time it strikes. The Orly Group emerged after a suspected Armenian guerrilla was arrested at Orly Airport in November 1981. It conducted numerous attacks in 1981 and 1982 in France, Lebanon, and Iran. []

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26 July 1983

West Germany: Insurance Company Attacked

In Stuttgart, an explosion at the Alliance Life Insurance Company caused considerable damage. Based on the timing and type of attack, we believe that the Revolutionary Cells (RZ) were responsible. []

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The Netherlands: Extradition of Armenian Terrorist

In The Hague, the Turkish-Armenian arrested by Dutch police for involvement in the 14 July assassination of a Turkish diplomat in Brussels has been extradited to Belgium. Investigation into the assassination—which is believed to be the work of the Justice Commandos for the Armenian Genocide—is continuing. []

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27 July 1983

Portugal: Armenian Terrorist Attack on Turkish Embassy

In Lisbon, a five-man team identifying themselves as members of the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA) attacked the Turkish Embassy and held several hostages for three hours before an explosion—believed to have been accidental—destroyed the building, killing the terrorists. The wife of the Turkish Deputy Chief of Mission and a Portuguese policeman were killed, and three people were injured. The ARA—in a communique sent to *Agence-France Presse* before the attack occurred—warned that it intended to hold the Embassy for 48 hours before destroying it. We suspect ARA may be a cover name for ASALA, but investigations continue. []

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France: Bombing at Armenian Cultural Center

In Paris, a bomb exploded in front of an Armenian cultural center, damaging the building but causing no casualties. Although no one claimed responsibility for the explosion, Armenian terrorist attacks in Western Europe during the past 10 days may have provoked a retaliatory attack from the large Turkish population in Paris. []

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28 July 1983

Iran: Orly Group Threatens More Attacks Against French Interests

In Tehran, the Armenian terrorist group Orly called *Agence-France Presse* to threaten a rocket attack on the French Embassy on 30 July. []

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29 July 1983

Switzerland: Explosion at Industrialist's Home

In Zurich, an early morning explosion caused moderate damage, but no injuries. In a letter claiming responsibility, the Commando Grober Ernstile group stated that the attack was in protest of a local construction project, in which the industrialist was involved. According to US Embassy officials in Bern, the incident is part of a continuing pattern of terrorist violence prompted by local issues. []

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31 July 1983

Spain: Civil Guards Slain

In San Sebastian, Basque terrorists are suspected of the shooting deaths of two Spanish Civil Guardsmen. We believe the Military Wing of ETA was behind the assassinations, which marked the end of a weeklong protest by the Basque population against the Madrid government. []

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Spain: Bank Bombing in Basque Country

In Bilbao, the bombing of a bank by suspected ETA terrorists injured two people. ETA continues its attacks on banks that refuse to pay "revolutionary taxes." []

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